

US Club Soccer's National Premier Leagues

The Vision

The Structure

The Future





US Club Soccer's 10-Year Vision

US Club Soccer's 10-Year Vision Statement articulates, among others, the following principles:

- Clubs and their leadership should be the primary decision-makers in the structure and organization of youth soccer.
- US Club Soccer should provide a vehicle for clubs and technical leaders to work together to elevate the game and the player development environment.
- US Club Soccer should provide leadership in raising the standards and expectations for clubs and coaches across the country.

Based upon these fundamental principles, the **National Premier Leagues** (NPL) are being created throughout the country to provide the highest level of competition in given geographic areas, and to elevate and change the competitive youth landscape.





NPL Mission Statement

US Club Soccer's National Premier Leagues are created to provide a national competitive developmental platform:

- (i) focused on long-term player development;
- (ii) for the country's top soccer clubs, allowing consistent, meaningful high-level games appropriately scheduled with higher training-to-game ratios;
- (iii) that allows players to be scouted and evaluated by U.S. Soccer National Staff and Technical Advisors;
- (iv) that is designed and structured by the clubs, based on the needs of the clubs;
- (v) using international rules of competition; and
- (vi) that provides an avenue for qualification for a national **League Champions Cup**.





The NPL Development Process

National Premier Leagues are built through a “top-down” process:

- **Identify** the top-tier clubs in the area
- **Identify** problems in the existing competition platforms
- **Create** a vehicle for collaboration between the clubs
- **Develop** a better competitive platform
- **Develop** an integrated player identification and development program





The 2011-12 NPL

For the 2011-12 season, the NPL will include nearly every state east of the Mississippi River:

- Florida Premier League
- Gulf States Premier League
- Midwest Developmental League
- Northeast Pre-Academy League
- Southeast Pre-Academy League
- Texas Pre-Academy League

The NPL also includes the top-tier divisions within these pre-existing premier leagues:

- NorCal Premier League
- Oregon Premier League
- Northern Illinois Soccer League



The 2011-12 NPL Footprint





2011-12 National Premier Leagues





National Premier Leagues 2011-12



The NPL program also includes the top-tier divisions within these three existing US Club Soccer premier leagues.





NPL Structural Factors for Success

There are several factors in the structure of the NPL that are attractive to the top clubs and their technical leadership, and that help improve the player development environment:

- The NPL is club-based ... **creating stability and consistency.**
- The NPL empowers member clubs to make decisions... **creating support, buy-in and innovation.**
- The NPL includes the best clubs ... **creating credibility and excitement.**
- The NPL is a “club-driven” competition structure ... **creating flexibility.**





NPL Governance

- The NPL is operated and governed by US Club Soccer and its day-to-day staff to ensure consistency between the different leagues and support the marketing and administrative functions.
- Every NPL includes an *Advisory Committee* consisting of the DOCs of the member clubs.
- Every NPL has a locally-based administrator, hired by US Club Soccer, who manages day-to-day logistics of the league.
- US Club Soccer controls NPL budgets, finances, playing rules, events and provides other administrative support fundamental to operation of the leagues.





NPL Basic Structure

The competition format of every NPL will be different depending on the needs and demands of the geographic area, and the size and quality of the player pool. However, there are several fundamental requirements of every NPL:

- The best clubs in the area
- A meaningful league structure of home and away games
- No re-entry in a half at U-13 to U-15, and no re-entry in a game at U-16 and above
- One game per day; daily roster changes possible
- Minimum training frequency and participation expectations consistent with U.S. Soccer technical guidelines
- An advisory committee of Directors of Coaching
- A *US Club Soccer Player Development Program* incorporated into the league as part of the *id² Program*





Player Development Programs

Player Development Programs (PDP) are identification and development programs designed to identify the top players in each NPL in specific age groups.

Player Development Programs are sub-programs within US Club Soccer's id² Program, and are created through scouting and coaching references within each NPL.

Each *Player Development Program* includes:

- Two 11 vs. 11 games (one Saturday & one Sunday) scouted by U.S. Soccer Technical Staff
- One presentation to participants from U.S. Soccer Technical Staff (or other technical leader)
- Training gear for participants
- Operated and managed by US Club Soccer staff



2011-2012 NPL Player Development Programs



Florida Premier League and Gulf States Premier League Joint PDP

- December/January 2012 (1999 boys & 1998 girls)

Midwest Developmental League PDP

- July 2012 (1999 boys)

Northeast Pre-Academy League PDP

- June 2012 (1999 boys)

Southeast Pre-Academy League PDP

- May 2012 (1999 boys)

Texas Pre-Academy League PDP

- May/June 2012 (1999 boys)



National Premier League Champions Cup



- The champions of each National Premier League qualify for the **National Premier Leagues Champions Cup**.
- Winners of each National Premier League can be crowned either solely through regular-season competition, or through a postseason playoff process. This decision is made by each league based on its specific needs and desires.
- The **National Premier Leagues Champions Cup** will be played in a single location in July of each year to crown the overall NPL national champion.





NPL Membership: Minimum Standards

NPL membership is conditioned on maintaining certain minimum standards in multiple technical and administrative areas, many of which mirror that of the U.S. Soccer Development Academy. Clubs seeking to join the NPL must meet these standards.

- The standards do include competitive performance at some level, but they are not solely based on competition.
- The standards are club-based, not team-based.

Member clubs of the NPL will be held to minimum standards in the following areas:

- Coaching licensing and continuing education
- Training frequencies
- Administrative support
- Facilities
- Developmental curriculum
- Competitive performance
- Number of players developed within the club for higher levels





Future Expansion of the NPL:

- US Club Soccer will be looking to expand existing National Premier Leagues to include new clubs that meet the minimum standards.
- US Club Soccer will also be looking to add new National Premier Leagues in specific geographic areas.
- While the 2011-12 leagues are primarily focused on boys, the NPL will have an expanded presence for girls in the future.
- As the NPL model grows, US Club Soccer and the member clubs will evaluate the need and opportunity to “drill deeper” into second- and third-division leagues for second teams and smaller clubs.





National Premier Leagues

US Club Soccer is working with top clubs across the country to improve the development and competition platform for American players. The National Premier Leagues will be a large part of improving this environment.

For more information on the National Premier Leagues, please contact the US Club Soccer Member Services Representative in your region:

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